

From: Todd Symionow
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/28/02 2:58pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

The settlement that the DOJ and Microsoft came up with is ineffectual and is bad for the people of the United States. After reading the agreement, it appears to me that Microsoft dictated the document to the DOJ, who typed it up for them. Microsoft has received a judgement of being a Monopoly by the courts. Microsoft should have received a fine of several billion dollars, plus stiff oversight into its practices (like IBM had to go through).

The settlement does not punish Microsoft for its illegal and monopolistic activities and doesn't prevent it from continuing to operate in illegal and monopolistic ways. The most important part of the case was ignored by the DOJ--Microsoft's tying of software to its operating system. The largest harm that Microsoft has done to the citizens of the United States is the integration of more and more software into its operating system (Microsoft calls it middleware). Every time Microsoft integrates another program into the operating system, it harms the marketplace by killing competition, forcing us to use Microsoft's proprietary technology (such as activeX, rather than Java), and preventing us from uninstalling unwanted features/software. Microsoft keeps talking about innovating. When it talks about innovation it's really talking about monopolization.

The agreement talks about removing shortcuts and icons. The real answer is for the web browser (and other middleware) to be separate from the operating system so that the consumer can choose which browser (middleware) to use. This wasn't in Microsoft's monopolistic interest, because having the browser (middleware) separate from the operating system prevented Microsoft from locking consumers into using Microsoft's proprietary technologies.

I am extremely concerned about Microsoft's .net technology. Not only is Microsoft tying all of their products into .net, but they are beginning to require consumers to use it. An example includes the messaging and multimedia features built into Windows XP. To take advantage of these features, you have to sign up for a Passport (.net) account. This is another form of Microsoft's illegal and monopolistic behavior.

Microsoft has continuously broken previous consent decrees. I have no confidence that Microsoft will abide by this decree either. Besides, this decree is just a slap on the wrist. The world's largest monopoly in history must be fenced-in and controlled so that it doesn't continue to harm consumers. I truly feel that the current DOJ, under the current Pro-business Bush administration is doing a disservice to the American people by not dealing with Microsoft more harshly. This is a turning point. Our government has the opportunity to change Microsoft's behavior now and to restore competition in the computer software marketplace. The Microsoft settlement will not restore competition and it does not punish Microsoft for its illegal, monopolistic actions.

I do not support the current Microsoft Settlement. The opinions expressed in this email are my own.

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